**LSE Ethical Review Questions**

**Section A: About the study**

**A1. Title of research project /study:** The effect of parasocial relationships and degrees of investment in celebrities on likelihood to “cancel” when faced with transgressions.

**A2. Abstract**

*Your abstract should outline in non-technical language the purpose of the research (Approx. 150-200 words)*

The purpose of my research is to understand the relationship between the degree of parasociality and investment that an individual has with a celebrity and how this would affect their willingness to cancel the celebrity in cases of transgressions. Studies have shown that due to repeated exposure to celebrities or media figures, people often form parasocial relationships with them which essentially means that they may believe that they know the media figure and can make accurate attributions about their behaviour. Although past studies have examined this effect in terms of brand endorsements, few have considered the implications of this “blind following” on celebrity ownership and the condonement of objectively incorrect actions. My research outlines how the degree of parasociality with a celebrity and the amount of investment made in the celebrity (monetary, time, social) can affect their ability and willingness to cancel them in a series of transgression scenarios. I will also look into which kinds of transgressions are more forgivable than others (controllable vs uncontrollable) and the justifications behind these. For the purpose of this study, I will be focusing on one celebrity (Taylor Swift) and will be generalising my findings to wider contexts.

**A3. Data Collection**

*Briefly describe the data collection method(s) to be used (Approx. 100-150 words)*

Data will be conducted via online surveys. After recruiting participants through cluster sampling, they will be sent an online survey to complete. The survey will take less than 10 minutes. Participants will provide their informed consent and basic demographic information at the beginning of the survey. They will then complete a questionnaire surrounding their degree of investment in Taylor Swift (for e.g. whether they have purchased concert tickets, etc). They will then complete a parasociality scale detailing their degree of parasocial relationship with her as a celebrity. This will be followed by a presentation of several news stories presenting a series of scenarios of Taylor Swift engaging in transgressions. Their willingness to cancel or engage with her will then be measured via another Likert-scale. At the end of the study, there will be a complete debrief and participants will be thanked for their time.

**A4. In what country or countries will data collection take place? Will you travel there, or will the**

**research be conducted remotely/online?**

* Data will be collected within the UK and the research will be conducted online

**A5. Will your study be conducted in the LSE Behavioural Lab?**

* No

**A6. When do you expect to begin data collection?**

* I expect to begin data collection in early January

**A7. What is the approximate duration of your data collection?**

* Data was collected for five weeks

**Section B: Researcher Details**

**B1. Your Name**

Saachi Sabnis

**B2. Are you the lead researcher (at LSE) on the project?**

*If you are, for example, completing this ethics review for your dissertation, then you are the lead researcher.*

Yes, I am the lead researcher

**B3. Name and email address of supervisor**

*Students should enter the name/email address of their project/dissertation/thesis supervisor (or academic mentor/advisor) as appropriate.*

Bradley Franks - b.franks@lse.ac.uk

**Section C: Does your study require research ethics approval?**

**C1. Will your research/study involve ANY of the following?**

1. **Human participants (e.g. for interviews, focus groups, observations, etc.)**

Yes

**b) The collection or use of any personal data/identifiable information (e.g. names, email**

**addresses, IP addresses, social media data, visual material, etc.)**

No

**c) Any other information that could identify (or potentially lead to the identification of) a living individual. For example, where information from micro datasets, if combined, could lead to the identification of individuals.**

No

**d) The potential that findings/conclusions may have repercussions for any individuals or groups (in cases of either primary or secondary data analysis)**

No

**C2. Is there any other reason why your research might raise ethical issues, or why you need ethics**

**approval?**

No

**C3. Will the research involve accessing security-sensitive material, such as material related to**

**terrorism or violent extremism of any kind?**

No

**Section D: LSE vs external research ethics review**

**D1. Does your research/study involve NHS health or social care patients or carers?**

*If your study will involve research participants identified from, or because of their past or present use of NHS services (adult and children’s healthcare within the NHS and adult social care), or relatives or carers of past or present users of these services, you may need to obtain NHS REC approval. If you are unsure, please consult the Health Research Authority (HRA) Decision tool(*[*http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/*](http://www.hra-decisiontools.org.uk/ethics/)*)*

No

**D2. Is the study part of a collaborative research project that will undergo ethics review by another university Research Ethics Committee (referred to as Institutional Review Boards in some**

**countries)?**

No

**D3. Is there any other reason why the research will undergo ethics review by an organisation other than the LSE?**

No

**Section F: Type of ethics review**

**F1. Does the research involve vulnerable participants?**

*Note that vulnerability may be due to a number of factors, for instance: age, potential marginalisation, disability, disadvantageous power relationships within personal or professional roles, etc. Young people under the age of 18 may also be potentially vulnerable.*

No

**F2. Does the study involve children aged 16 or under?**

No

**F3. Will the research involve asking participants to respond to questions that might involve the discussion of sensitive topics?**

*For example: where research intrudes into the private sphere or delves into some deeply personal experience; where the study is concerned with deviance or social control; where the study impinges on the vested interests of powerful persons or the exercise of coercion or domination; where the research deals with things that are sacred to those being studied that they do not wish profaned; or where discussion of the topic could place the participant (or researcher) at risk.*

No

**F4. Does the study involve any use of deception, and/or will participants not be fully informed at**

**the start as to what the study is about)?**

*Deception can occur at a variety of levels: for example, at one level, experimental methods may depend on participants being deliberately misled as to the true nature or purpose of the research in which they are taking part; at another, covert participant observation may entail an implicit deception as to the true identity and role of the researcher. Deception may be a legitimate and necessary feature of social scientific research, but its use must always be properly justified.*

No

**F5. Does the study entail the collection of any biometric data?**

No

**F6. For primary data collection, will you be collecting written consent from all participants?**

*Written consent does not need to comprise a hard copy signature. Typed confirmation is acceptable.*

*For online surveys, written consent could be via an explicit tick-box after the study information is presented at the start of the survey. For secondary data please select ‘N/A’. However, the researcher should ensure, where relevant, that consent was given for the data to be used by third parties.*

Yes

**F7. Is there any reason the research might present any risks to either yourself or your participants?**

*For instance, if the research is politically sensitive and might attract the attention of authorities*

No

**F8. Is there any reason why the research requires review/approval by the Research Ethics Committee (as opposed to Departmental review/approval)?**

*For example, if REC approval is required by the funder or to satisfy other external requirements.*

No

**Section G: Ethics Review Questions (i)**

**G1. What participants will be involved in your study? How will they be identified/ recruited? Are there any inclusion / exclusion criteria? If yes, describe them.**

Participants will be recruited from student society group chats. There will be no criteria for exclusion. Informed consent will be obtained via Google Forms.

**G2. If you need to recruit participants via a gatekeeper\*, please give details. (Might this raise**

**issues of whether participants’ involvement is truly voluntary? Might the gatekeeper influence**

**potential participants in some other way?)**

*\*A gatekeeper could be anyone who the researcher needs to go through in order to gain access to participants.*

Do not need to recruit via gatekeeper

**G3. Will any incentives be offered to participants for taking part in the research? If so please give**

**details. (Might this unduly influence their decision as to whether or not to take part?)**

No

**G4. Are there any payments or other incentives to the researcher(s) that might be perceived as**

**having an impact on the objectivity of the research?**

No

**G5. Outline how participants will be given information about the study and what their**

**involvement will be, and how you will record consent. If you will not be obtaining informed**

**consent you must explain why.**

*Please see the guidance on informed consent, which includes a sample template. (N.B. You will be asked to attach a copy of your planned participant information sheet and consent form at the end of the online ethics portal.)*

**G6. Will participants be fully anonymized in your research outputs (dissertation, thesis,**

**publications)? If not, please provide a rationale as to why.**

Yes

**G7. Describe any other potential risks that your project might pose to participants, and what**

**safeguards will you put in place to address or mitigate these.**

Exposing participants to images or news surrounding their role models engaging in contradictory behaviour could cause psychological distress. To mitigate this, participants will be informed that these are fictitious stories and they will be debriefed about the true aim of the study post data collection.

**G8. Describe how you intend to handle issues of confidentiality and anonymity, both in your**

**collection of data and in your study outputs.**

Participants will be anonymised as the study will not collect personal identifiable data. The form will simply ask for demographic such as age, gender, year of study, etc and not relate to personal information. Additionally, participants will be informed that their data will remain encrypted and confidential throughout the process of the study. After the data has been collected and analysed, it will be deleted. Participants will also be able to withdraw their data at any stage during the study. This will be stated at the beginning of the study.

**G9. Describe any potential risks that your project might pose to you as the researcher or any other**

**researchers involved in study. How will you mitigate these?**

Not Applicable

**G10. Will the study provide any benefits to participants or third parties?**

No

**G11. Might the dissemination of the study results adversely affect (directly or indirectly) any**

**individuals or groups? If so, are there ways you can mitigate this?**

No

**G12. If you will be working with (or employing) other researchers: describe the principles of good**

**practice that you will follow, addressing issues such as ownership of data and co-authorship. How**

**will you ensure that any local research assistants you hire will receive a fair and appropriate return**

**for their work? How will you maintain the integrity and good reputation of the discipline?**

N/A

**G13. If you plan to use any crowd-sourcing platforms (such as MTurk, Prolific Academic) to collect**

**data, please give details here.**

*Note that researchers should treat participants on crowd-sourcing platforms fairly. Thus, researchers should ensure that they set fair rates of pay; enable easy ways of communication between participants and researcher, etc.). If you have never used these platforms before, please seek training before doing so. If not relevant, please enter N/A*

Not Applicable

**Section H: Ethics Review Questions (ii)**

**H1. Will your research involve children / young people aged 16 or under?**

*[If Yes] Please give details of what their involvement will be and what safeguards you will put in place; Please clarify whether parental/guardian consent will also be obtained. Please download and read the NCB Guidelines for Research with Children and Young People (https://www.ncb.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachment/NCB%20guidelines%20CYP.pdf). Please also refer to the LSE Safeguarding Policy (https://info.lse.ac.uk/staff/services/Policies-a procedures/Assets/Documents/safPol.pdf ) You may be asked to obtain a Disclosure and Barring Service check. Please confirm that you have read these guidelines.*

No

**H2. lf the study involves discussion of sensitive topics\*, please give details and how you intend to**

**handle this.**

*\*For example - but not limited to - sexual activity, illegal behaviour or social control, experience of violence or abuse, drug use, a topic/issue considered sacred or taboo to the participants, etc.*

*Please ensure you upload a copy of your interview question guide and/or survey questions at the end of the form.*

No

**H3. Is there a potential risk that participants might disclose information indicating that they or**

**someone else is at risk of significant harm? If so, how would you deal with this?**

No

**H4. If you plan to collect verbal, rather than written consent, please indicate why this is? Please**

**also indicate how you will record their consent (e.g. by audio recording, or by a witness)**

No

**H5. If the research involves the use of deception in any way, please give details and explain how**

**you will de-brief participants at the end of the study.**

*Please refer to the British Psychological Society’s Code of Human Research Ethics*

No

**Section J: Previous experience and covering comments**

**J1. Outline any previous experience and/or ethics training that you have that is relevant to this**

**study**

*If you will be conducting interviews on a sensitive topic, it would be helpful to know if you have any*

*previous interview experience*

Having completing two years of the BSc Psychological and Behavioural Science programme I have received extensive training on qualitative and quantitative research methods. This has equipped me to integrate ethical considerations into my study design. I will not be conducting interviews.

**J2. If there are any covering comments you would like to flag to the reviewer(s), please add them**

**here.**

*Otherwise just add 'N/A' These comments will appear at the TOP of your review form when*

*received by your supervisor or the Research Ethics Committee for review.*

No